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Slovenian Third Age University, From Project to Project

Building Bridges in Adult education
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(A) Slovenian Third Age University and what it has become over 32 years

History/ structure

Established back in 1986 after a two- year experimental, research and developmental programme, upon an initiative of two experts in the field of adult education and andragogy and with the support of CTJ, the national adult learning centre specialised in foreign languages, Slovenian Andragogic Society and Faculty of Philosophy in Ljubljana *Slovenian Third Age University* is today a national non-governmental organisation for education and social inclusion (combating against the excluding social mechanisms). It is based on the work of experts and older volunteers.

Slovenian Third Age University has four sections:

- (1) Network of 51 universities spread over the country with currently more than 21000 students, more than 1000 mentors of all ages. It has created about 1000 new jobs...
- (2) Ljubljana Third Age University with more than 3500 older students,
- (3) Research and Development Institute and
- (4) Institute for Dyslexia.

Fields of activity

It provides education *for* older adults and *about* older adults;

It provides socially engaged education of older people and education for their personal growth;

It provides integrated counselling and guidance for active ageing;

It provides education *for* an organises volunteering of older people in public institutions;

It sets up structures for self-organised reciprocal and collaborative learning (Each-one-teach-one, study circles etc.);

Since 2007 it has been active in the field of intergenerational learning/theory/practices;

It has been performing continuous public campaigning;

It organises a bi-annual International festival of Knowledge and Culture in Later life

It organises civil dialogues;

It provides advocacy of older people and contributes to shaping relevant policies;



Through educational and cultural activities and results it supports local development (education having double, learning and action aims). It coordinates two networks of non-governmental organisations in the field of older adult education.

International co-operation. From project to project

Since the very beginning (1986) Slovenian Third Age University has been connected internationally.

It is the founding member of DANET, Danube networkers for Europe and EMIL, A Map of Intergenerational Network.

It is one of the 15 core members of ForAge for Later Life Learning

It has been involved in more than 15 Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci programmes all in the field of older adult education and two of them in dyslexia and specific learning difficulties

Over the last three years the most outstanding projects, to my mind, are:

ECIL, the European Certificate of Intergenerational Learning
Personal Town Tours (A Grundtvig project)
CINAGE

(B) CINAGE, European cinema for active ageing

Who is it for?

The CINAGE project and its results are meant for adult educators, older adults, adult education providers, experts in the field of active ageing, European film experts, decision and policy makers.

Addressing European projects one is mostly interested

- (1) in the project rationale
- (2) in the project process
- (3) the project results
- (4) the project outcomes

(2) The CINAGE rationale

In the 20-th century cinema became one the most important cultural practices and systems of representations. It started as an interesting innovative technique rejoicing audiences, but film makers, film directors, actors, critics and university studies have all contributed to the transformation of films into works of art. Cinema is an art, a very special and expressive art associating image, sound and text. Therefore it veichles images of old age more powerfully than other media. Indeed, it may produce a strong impact on representations of old age, understanding of old age and dealing with it.

Members of the European project CINAGE European cinema for active ageing were convinced that in the 21st century when active ageing has become the most prominent professional and political vision of later life, cinema as well as other media should more often convey images of active and socially included older people, nurturing valuable and productive relationships with other generations.

Consequently, it is important that cinema does not vehicle out dated stereotyped images about exclusively fragile, helpless, dependent, isolated and threatened older people terminally ill and facing death, miserable ageing and old age, replacing them with images more in conformity with post-modern times and knowledge based society, the times where society and ageing have radically changed and will continue changing.

What is active ageing?

Above all it is about remaining fully included in society. It is about evolving *with* society and in relation to other generations. It is about being able to carry on one's life without major interruptions imposed by social and cultural practices, legislation, social expectations, out dated policies etc. On the social level active ageing means having more or less equal access to social resources: education, culture, health, work, transport and accommodation etc.

It means being included in society (having one's life interconnected with the lives of others). Having access to the public sphere/places. Active ageing means being able to participate in economic development without legal constraints.

Thus active ageing means ageing in good health, being more satisfied at work, having access to decision making processes especially in local community, contributing to society as an active citizen, being able to deploy one's talents and live independently as well and as long as possible.

There are several definitions of active ageing (WHO, OECD, European Commission) in the CINAGE project we dwelt upon the WHO definition and the competencies one should have.

On *the individual level* active ageing can be anything from being surrounded, being respected, being regularly asked for advice, to learning, walking and exercising.

It is important to have clear idea about active ageing when developing, delivering or organising older adult education.

(2) The CINAGE process

The process is about Content Programming, Setting Aims, Implementing, Evaluating the programme and indeed the whole project

Six competencies were chosen (unfortunately, generativity was skipped)

The learning competence;
The emotional competence;
The economic-financial competence;
The competence needed for healthy living;
The technological competence;
The civic competence.

They were approached through various activities.

In the CINAGE project our intention was to answer a number of questions (aims):

- To what extent does current national/European legislation reflect active ageing?
- How is old age pictured in European films; what are the most frequent stereotypes?
- What is active ageing and how can one age actively?
- How can cinema contribute to the change of the older people's social roles and their position in different social contexts and communities?
- How can cinema help that older people remain fully included in society nurturing valuable and productive relationships with other generations?
- How to improve the knowledge and understanding of films, particularly in relation to later life and older people?
- How to make an effective, meaningful, socially engaged featured short film?

(3) The project results/methods/activities

CINAGE declaration on the importance of European cinema and active ageing, CINAGE leaflet, CINAGE poster, CINAGE Research on Active Ageing in four countries (PT, UK, IT, SL), 12 selected featured films, focus groups discussing active ageing and film making, pilot courses, filmmaking workshops, conference and a festival »Film for active ageing«, CINAGE course, CINAGE old age situations contributed by older participants themselves, strategies for coping actively with old age and ageing actively, manual for older learners, guide for adult and older adult educators, 12 featured short films on active ageing produced by older course participants, trailers, a post CINAGE public performance, a presentation booklet,

vaste national and international public campaign and dissemination of results. A paper version of the manual and guide and a CD containing them and films.

Slovenian co-lateral results

Permanent co-operation with the Academy of Theatre, Film, Radio and TV A new annual programme »How do we screen films« A new cycle of films followed by public discussions set up in co-operation with the Komuna Cinema.

A back stage film...

(4) Outcomes / conclusion

Learning about true, natural intergenerational learning through lasting creative processes:

New findings about the nature of active ageing;

Film is the most important cultural practice of the 20th and the 21st century. It is a system of representations, an inspiration, but also a vehicle of stereotypes;

Film helps (older) people understand themselves, discuss themselves and society. In all cases it shapes their individual and social identity;

Film enables older people to enter visual communication, the most important type of communication in the 21st century in our visual civilisation;

Creativity and generativity are ways and conditions sine qua non to age actively. How to be active without being creative;

Films are full of stereotypes about older people, since they are made mostly by those who are younger. Younger people do not and cannot know how older people think, how older people feel, how older people talk. Films about older people should be made by older script writers and film directors;



The right questions should be asked about old age and older people. It is time we stepped out from the ideology (a set of beliefs) about older people and out of our own ideology to begin with. It is time to set the right questions as to get the right answers;

We should take care of social fairness on all levels: on the distributive, cultural and symbolic level;

The participants in the CINAGE course are now positive about what is active and non-active ageing. They are able to tell the difference.

Literature and references

Barrère, Anne, Mairesse, François. *L'inclusion sociale: Les enjeux de la culture et de l'éducation*. Paris: Harmattan.

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